

# Ames Historical Society

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AMES • IOWA

## Newsletter to Members 2013 SUMMER...ISSUE #2/4

*Discovering our history,  
Preserving our past,  
Sharing our stories.*



*On a beautiful summer day, July 14, Tom Richards, Nevada, sang pioneer-era songs at Hoggatt School. A fine carpenter, Tom also restored the school's roof last summer.*

### Ames Historical Society Board:

|                     |                                |
|---------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>Co-President</b> | Mary Atherly                   |
| <b>Co-President</b> | Kathy Svec                     |
| <b>Co-Secretary</b> | Laura Sullivan, Lynette Spicer |
| <b>Treasurer</b>    | Ken Cameron                    |

### Board Members:

Don Beitz, Bob Bourne, Jan Breitman, Keith Bystrom, Craig Hastings, Phyllis Heffron, Carol Phillips, Mike Quinn, Ardy Ulrichson, Sharon Wirth

*The Board meets the 2nd Thursday of each month 6:45pm at 416 Douglas. Members welcome!*

|                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| <b>Director</b> | Casie Vance                                     |
| <b>Staff</b>    | Alex Feifar, Margaret Vance<br>Hannah Frederick |

|                          |                |
|--------------------------|----------------|
| <b>Volunteer Curator</b> | Dennis Wendell |
| <b>Facility Manager</b>  | Neal Tarman    |
| <b>Newsletter Editor</b> | Kathy Svec     |

Ames Historical Society is an incorporated, 501c3 not-for-profit organization dedicated to promoting interest in local and state history through publications, programs, exhibitions and operation of an archive and historic site.

**Headqtrs:** 416 Douglas, Ames, IA 50010  
Open Wed-Fri, 1-5pm  
**Mail:** PO Box 821, Ames, IA 50010  
**Phone:** 515-232- 2148  
**E-mail:** mail@ameshistoricalsociety.org  
**Website:** www.AmesHistoricalSociety.org  
**Facebook:** www.facebook.com/ameshistoricalsociety

The **newsletter** is published four times a year for AHS members. Direct comments and questions to: Editor, PO Box 821, Ames, IA 50010 or e-mail above.

**Hoggatt School** is located on the grounds of Meeker School, near 18<sup>th</sup> and Burnett, Ames, Iowa. Open April 1 through October 31.

## Hoggatt Summer Programs Educate & Delight!

Please join us Sunday afternoons, 2-4 p.m. for pleasant times at Hoggatt School! It is located on the grounds of Meeker School, at 18<sup>th</sup> and Burnett in Ames.

Hoggatt School was built in 1861- 62 for the families of pioneer children before Ames was established. It was first a country school and then was the first public educational building in the city of Ames. The school was used for six years until 1868. The structure is restored to the 1862 time period.

Regular 2013 public open hours are 2 to 4 p.m. Sundays through August 25.

The school is also open by appointment for group tours and programs through October 15, 2013. Call 515-232-2148.

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### SPECIAL PROGRAMS THIS SUMMER:

#### Sunday, July 21, open 2 - 4 p.m.

Come hear the stories of the first school in Ames, Iowa.

#### Sunday, July 28, open 2 - 4 p.m.

**2:15 – 3:15** Janice Roxberg Presenting; Connections: Pioneer History to Button Collecting

#### Sunday, August 4, open 2 - 4 p.m.

**3 p.m. – Civil War-era Games**

Come play the simple but energetic games that school children played in the 1860s!

#### Sunday, August 11, open 2 - 4 p.m.

**2:15 – 4:00** Ice Cream Social and Doug Provow Presenting; Sing-a-Long & History Behind the Songs

#### Sunday, August 18, open 2 - 4 p.m.

Come hear the stories of the first school in Ames, Iowa.

#### Sunday, August 25 open 2 - 4 p.m.

**2:15 – 3:15** Pam Riney-Kehrberg (Chair, ISU History Dept.) Presenting; Connections: The Homestead Act to Pioneer Life



*Please Join Us on August 24!*

**Ames Historical Society's first Benefit Dinner, "Illuminating Ames History"  
will be held August 24, 2013  
at the Octagon Center for the Arts, 427 Douglas, Ames.**

Festivities begin at 6 p.m. with a social and silent auction, followed by dinner (served on vintage Sheldon-Munn Hotel china) and a program.

The highlight for the evening will be the premiere of the new film,  
**"Stitched Into Time: Remembering Collegiate Manufacturing Company of Ames, Iowa"**  
researched by Teresa Larson and produced by Jeff Grummer of B&G Productions.

Cost for the event is \$75 per person. Space is limited – be sure to reserve early!

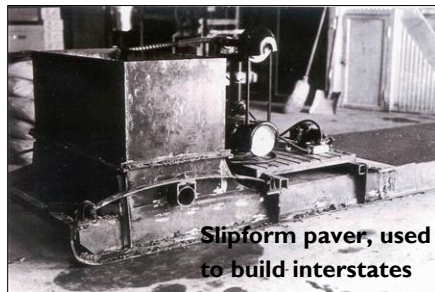
Proceeds will go to the Ames Historical Society Endowment.

Watch your mail box for your personal Invitation. If you do not receive one, please call the Society at 515-232-2148. The Benefit is open to anyone who would like to attend.



**Centennial Exhibit Closes Aug. 4:  
DOT: A Journey in Transportation**

An exhibit showcasing chapters from Iowa's transportation history is nearing the end of its run at the Octagon Center for the Arts, 427 Douglas Avenue. The exhibit closes after Sunday, August 4.



Slipform paver, used to build interstates

**Ames 150<sup>th</sup> Approaches**

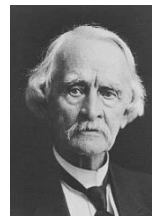
The Ames Sesquicentennial will be marked in 2014 with a number of special events that are now in the planning stages. It is not too late to become involved!

The Society plans several exhibits. Members who would like to help are welcome! Call 515-232-2148 to state your interest, or email [mail@ameshistoricalsociety.org](mailto:mail@ameshistoricalsociety.org).

A varied schedule of happenings is envisioned and local organizations have been invited to take part by providing their own activity or program in conjunction with the Sesquicentennial. It will be a great opportunity to showcase the histories of individuals, groups, institutions and businesses.

A calendar of sesquicentennial events will be assembled to promote all programs.

"Like" us on Facebook and follow us there:  
[www.facebook.com/ameshistoricalsociety](http://www.facebook.com/ameshistoricalsociety)



### Hoggatt School On the Move!

Hoggatt School has experienced moves in location throughout its history and is about to undergo yet another one!

The Ames Community School District is developing plans to build a new Meeker School building on the same site and as a result, Hoggatt School will be relocated. The Society is working with District officials to find an appropriate location near the new school.



This project offers an opportunity to improve accessibility and visitor parking.

Moving an 1861 building is no simple task. Care must be taken to avoid damage to

the historic building fabric. Additional considerations include providing an appropriate setting, moisture control, drainage issues, foundation specifications and the possibility of adding electrical service.

Architects working on the new Meeker building have toured Hoggatt School to become familiar with its structural components. Sharon Wirth and Carol Phillips are the appointed liaisons working with the District on details of the move that should take place in late October. For this reason, tour appointments will end after October 15, rather than 31.

### Expansion Plans Underway at HQ

Through the support of our loyal members, the Society has accumulated the resources to expand into more space in our headquarters building at 416 Douglas. We will take over the entire first floor by fall.



To begin this process, our first floor tenant will move to second floor. Remodeling for their move has begun. When their office is relocated, changes on first floor will begin in timed phases so that we can continue to provide services without interruption.

When complete, more space will be provided for exhibits, presentations, staff and storage. We will also use the main building doors as our entrance. At this time, open hours will be expanded. Our tentative grand opening will be November 6!

### Upcoming Events

Friday, October 18, 7:30pm (note time change)  
at the Octagon Center for the Arts, 427 Douglas

#### ***Abe Mezvinsky and his Legacy***

*by Norton and Ed Mezvinsky*

Many Ames residents remember Abe Mezvinsky and his three Ames Fruit & Grocery Stores. During this program, Abe's sons will trace his life from his arrival in Ames around 1934 until his retirement and move in 1980 to Kansas City, MO, where he died in 1982. The focus will be on Abe as a businessman and benefactor and on life for one of Ames' very few orthodox Jewish families. Organizers would be pleased to hear from Society members that remember Abe and his stores.

Saturday - Sunday, August 31 - September 1, 2013  
in Arnolds Park, Iowa

#### ***2013 Induction of the Noteables into the Iowa Rock n' Roll Music Association Hall of Fame***

A concert/celebration is being held for the Ames band, The Notables and others that are being inducted into the Iowa Hall of Fame this year. The Noteables formed in 1965 in Ames with members from Ames High School and Iowa State University. The group was together for five years. They met and worked with other noteworthy performers of the era including Paul Revere & the Raiders, Stevie Wonder, Andy Kim, Carol Burnett, and Tommy Roe. The band played rock & roll, rhythm & blues and even a little jazz. More information about the band is at [www.iowarocknroll.com/inductees](http://www.iowarocknroll.com/inductees)

### AHS Endowment Fund

Since its 2005 establishment, the Society's Endowment Fund has slowly but steadily grown to over \$100,000! We are so grateful to our members, donors and friends!

Contributions to the Endowment's principle stay in the fund and grow. Each year, 5% of that growth is available to the Society.

For the first time this year, the Society took the annual distribution rather than channeling it back into the Fund. These proceeds are used to support daily operations and staff salaries.

The Endowment Fund is housed at the Story County Community Foundation, a subset of the Greater Des Moines Community Foundation. To learn more about 2013 Endow Iowa Tax Credits and the Charitable IRA Rollover, call the SCCF at 515-232-9200 or go to [www.storycountyfoundation.org](http://www.storycountyfoundation.org).

## Headquarters Happenings: Around 416 Douglas

### Lincoln School Bell

**Marie Martin Mancuso** was in to donate the Lincoln School bell on behalf of the Paul Martin Family. Custodian Bentley Lande must have faithfully rung this bell to summon pupils in the 1930s-1950s. Also available is the panoramic photo of Lincoln School children and teachers posed with the new, white Buffalo fire engine, around 1943. Mr. Lande, who is quite tall, is included in the photo.



### Remembering Ames

**Anita Wald Tuttle** wrote to say, "Thank you for reminding me with every newsletter how privileged I was to have spent my formative years in Ames. Your article on the Iowa Highway Commission reminded me of my father's work there designing concrete bridges. My mother shopped with Abe Mezvinsky and I wish I could be there on October 18 for his story. And all the interesting people from all walks of life who made Ames their home at one time or another. I wonder if part of their hearts are still there in Ames as I find mine is. I hope those who live there now can really appreciate this Gem of a City. (By the way - some place I have clay marbles that should be at Hoggatt School)."

### Ames Remembers WWII

**L. Nelson Spohnheimer** emailed this note, "Thanks so much for the transcript of the "Ames Remembers World War II" interview with my father, Levi Spohnheimer. I've just read it and like all my siblings, I learned a lot of new things! I'm not sure I could remember the details of my earlier life like my Dad did." [Note: The "Ames Remembers" project was undertaken by Cynthia Bennet when she was employed as Programs Coordinator around 2002.]

### The Paul Clark Report

Retiree **Paul Clark**, Ames, is a regular volunteer at Society HQ. His forte has been identifying the oldest negatives in The Tribune Photo Archive. Recently, he learned to operate the scanner, which has greatly aided his work. Prior to a recent break for a family reunion, he reported. "I have scanned around 4500 negatives since starting in January (about 25 per hour). I have also been printing articles of interest from our Tribune microfilm to coincide with the more recent Tribune negatives. I started with October '73 and have made copies up through June '76." [Note: Paul's our hero!]

### 1966 Miss Ames Pageant

**Members of Ames Evening Lions Club** (below) donated an historic silent film to the Society. Titled "Miss Ames Pageant 1966," the film was found recently in a closet at Lions state headquarters. The club sponsored the pageant on March 29, 1966 at Central's Auditorium (now City Auditorium). ISU coed and Kappa Alpha Theta member, Diana Waldorf, was the winner. Participants included Mayor Don Newbrough, COC president Verle Burgason, emcee George Norris, contestants Esther Borden and Sandra Spatcher, and entertainers ISU Folksingers.



Presenting the film (above) to Collections Curator, Dennis Wendell are, front row: Dave Berryhill (pointing to photo of Diana as 1966 ISU Bomb Beauty Attendant), Roman Lynch, Al Potter; back row: Ronald Schappaugh, Dick Brown, and Joe Reutter. The club also funded transfer of the film to DVD and mailed a copy to Diana (Waldorf) Baker, now residing in Hawaii. In a recent interview, Diana noted that she went on to win the title of First Runner-Up in the Miss Iowa Pageant held in Davenport in July 1966. Additionally, it was discovered that Dennis and Diana had both been student employees at the ISU Library that year.

### WWII Rationing

**J. Paul Cunningham**, Oklahoma City, OK, reported this, "Recently I had to do a paper on rationing during World War II. My Google search took me to your web site. I lived through WW II, but your web site reminded me just how many of the details I had forgotten. Thanks for being so helpful.

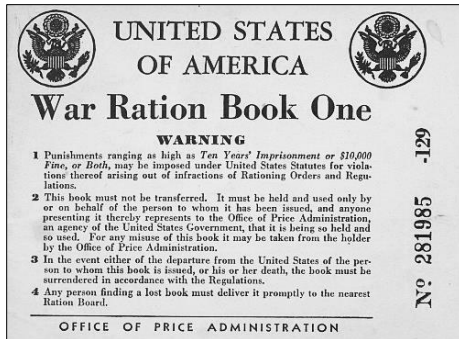
Here is the last paragraph of the paper I wrote: "Every time they started rationing something new, Mama or Papa would have to go to the Hughes School House and sign up for our ration books. When it came time to sign up for shoe ration books, Papa went to the school house by himself. When he returned, he dropped the ration books on the kitchen table and asked Mama to put them away. After looking them over, she asked Papa why he didn't know the correct names of the →



## Headquarters Happenings: Around 416 Douglas

twins, referring to Pauline and myself. Somewhat puzzled, he said he reckoned he did.

Then Mama wanted to know why my ration card showed my name as Paul Willard when it was actually



James Paul. She said Papa knew the names of his livestock better than the names of his own kids! Papa replied that he had heard Mama call me Paul

Willard on more than one occasion and assumed it was my correct name. Mama was quite put out with Papa. She explained that the only time she ever called me Paul Willard was when she was really mad at me for something I said or did. Papa allowed I would have to put up with Paul Willard on the ration card because he was sure the Government would not issue a new one, just to correct the name!"

### Questions Keep Her Up Nights!

Eileen Mericle frequently writes to comment when she receives a newsletter, "It was good to see Alan Spohnheimer in our recent copy. [We agree!] I see that you did a good turn for the MacRae family by providing rare photos. I was surprised to learn that Ames High principal Albert Caldwell was a survivor of the Titanic sinking and did not realize that "Magic Window" was up and running on TV way back in 1954. No wonder Betty Lou Varnum was so well known! Few could boast such a long-running TV show. I had heard the name Neta Snook before but did not realize she had trained Amelia Earhart. Wow! You people really make the past come alive!

"So, who is the oldest person in Ames? Do they keep a list of those Ames people who live to 100? What happens to the congratulatory letters they get from the Presidents? [Answers to these questions are unknown.] Is there any progress in resurrecting the Dinkey or some regular streetcar rail from Ames to campus and back? [Sadly, no.] San Francisco managed to keep their trolley cars. Why did Ames give up on the Dinkey? [Answer: It's all economics!]

"All these and more questions keep me up nights. I trust future issues of the AHS will answer some of my queries!"

### Third Graders Say Thanks!

The Society has been very pleased to be invited into Ames school district classrooms to give programs on local history. After several April 19, 2013 presentations, we received thank you letters from third graders in Mrs. Vertanen's and Mrs. Tibben's classes at Fellows Elementary. Here are a few:

"Thank you for coming to our school! I learned that people burn buffalo poop. I also learned that men back then had mustache cups and that Indians put the buffalo fur on the inside instead of the outside. I enjoyed you coming because you were nice, happy, answering our questions, helpful, informative, and caring. Thank you for coming to our school! Sincerely, Brett"

"Thank you for coming to our school. You were awesome and brave to go in front of not one but two classes and I enjoyed you talking about the families and what their names meant. You are good at really telling good historic things and you guys are good at not only just telling the things about historic places but you stop and ask questions in the middle of your speech. I thank you for taking the time to come to our school and telling us about the things in Ames and I hope to see you guys coming to our school again. Sincerely, Alex"



"Thank you for teaching us about Ames. Back then it was wonderful and really entertaining. I know that Ames is a wonderful place and in social studies we were learning about Ames. One thing I learned is about Main Street. Main Street's original name was Onondaga and also I learned that they had to use heavy tools. Your friend, Mariah"

"Thank you for coming to Fellows. I learned that the Dinkey's tracks are smaller than the railroad tracks we have now. I enjoyed the mustache cup and that we got to touch the buffalo fur. Thank you again for coming. Sincerely, Audrey"

## Headquarters Happenings: Around 416 Douglas

### Goodbye Anita and Wayne

Active Society volunteers, Anita and Wayne Beal, Ames, recently moved to Arizona. Anita and Wayne enjoyed projects that had a definite ending and undertook them one at a time. Among other projects, they indexed and merged WWII Story County veterans' information (over 5,000 names), merged the three indexes to Farwell Brown's books on Ames history, made transcripts of oral history interviews, merged and arranged Multiple Listing Service sheets and sorted clippings for the Ames Vertical File begun by librarians at the Ames Public Library. It leaves us a bit breathless to realize their accomplishments! Their legacy will continue as long as our archive and the internet survive and that's no mean accomplishment. While we wish them the very best, they will be sorely missed in Ames!



### 4-H Helps Again

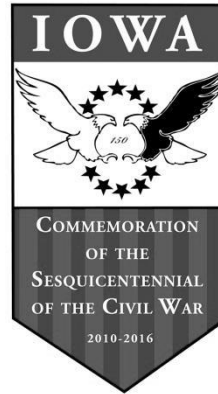
Every summer when the State 4-H Conference meets in Ames, hundreds of young volunteers fan out throughout the community to do service projects for organizations.



Four high school students spent several hours at HQ on June 26.

After helping staffer Hannah Frederick with building plans, the students began applying the clear plastic labels to archival boxes in our storage area (left). It's always a pleasure to work with these young people!

### Wrap-Up: Story County Civil War Sesquicentennial Event



On Flag Day, June 14, a ceremony commemorating the original dedication of two important Story County Civil War artifacts was held in Nevada. The event was well attended and those gathered were addressed by several speakers including Iowa Governor Terry Branstad (below, center).

The Bixby Letter and Gettysburg Address were delivered by Lance Mack, portraying Abraham Lincoln.

The Sons of the Union Veterans of the Civil War dedicated the new memorial tablet for the cannon that was captured at Shiloh.

A detailed document describing Story County's Civil War history, the background of its two artifacts and the life of its first war casualty, Jason D. Ferguson, may be found on the Society's website.



### Summer Employees

For several years, the Society has employed an ISU student eligible for the College Work-Study Program to do custodial work and other odd jobs. This summer our student is James Williams, a senior in Anthropology. Along with his daily cleaning and maintenance duties, he has been doing scanning, data entry, transcription and other projects.

Also working with us is summer intern, Colin Shawgo from Central College. He has been putting all exhibit panels on our website and cataloging certain collections with our "PastPerfect" software. His main project is reorganizing our digital photograph collection, organizing them into the same ten collections categories that all our other materials use.

Both James and Colin have been real assets to the staff this summer!

## Local Stories

### Summers at the Ames Drag Strip

In the late 1950s, an Ames club, the Nightcrawlers, operated a race track south of Ames on the east side of Highway 69 behind the Solar Inn. The hot rods raced east towards the Skunk River on land once used as a landing strip by the Gerbracht Aeronautic Corporation.

An adult advisory board helped direct the high school and college-age racers.



An article in the Ames Tribune on June 2, 1958, stated: "Safety, education and fun - in that order - is a summary of what participants 'get out' of drag racing. No longer is the scream of tires and the roar of souped-up engines on dangerous gravel roads, curving highways or dark streets a true picture of a drag race.

"Today, 'dragsters' across the country hold races on strips sanctioned by national organizations that insist upon full compliance with 30 basic rules of safety. The Ames drag strip is no exception.

"The drag strip is a showplace for those who race cars. It is in working with cars that the educational portion comes into view. Because so many boys have shown an interest in cars, the Ames school system includes a course of study in Auto Mechanics in its curriculum."

As Leonard Bengtson, the instructor of the twelve-week course points out, "The aim of the course is to teach; to teach the boys how the car works and how to make the simple repairs that every car owner can use." He stressed that the course teaches only the basic operations of the automobile and from this, there is no limit to what boys can learn from experimentation and books.

Another article stated, "Safety is learned through participation and through the club local enthusiasts have formed. The safety rules come from the national

headquarters of the Automobile Timing Association of America (ATAA). All participants are required to submit their car to an inspection by a technical committee before they are allowed to race. The cars are checked on 30 specified points ranging from roadworthiness to fire extinguishers to windshields.

"In an actual contest, a pair of cars race over a quarter-mile divided strip and slow down in a half-mile chute designed for that purpose.

"Nothing could be safer than dragging," said Margaret White, member of the local advisory board. "Both cars

are going in the same direction over a well-cared-for strip that is fenced off from the spectators." The strip was a quarter-mile long with 60 feet of paved surface at the head; paving was extended in 1958 another 200 feet.



To help promote safety on the highway as well as the drag strip, a number of local boys and students from Iowa State College organized the Nightcrawlers Club.

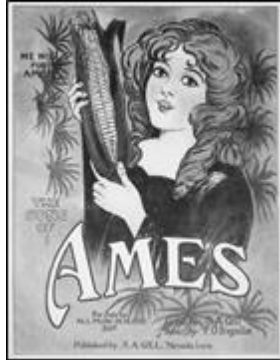
The Ames drag strip was located on J. D. Armstrong's property two miles south of Ames and owned by Bud Overland, but operated by the Nightcrawlers with the assistance of Overland and the advisory committee. The strip was open every Sunday of the summer at 11 a.m. and was supported by gate receipts.



*The Gulliver brothers pose with their straight-eight Buick.*

# Museum Shop

Many unique items!



"Song of Ames" magnets

Ames t-shirts; Children's activity books

All of Farwell Brown's books on Ames

Vintage handkerchiefs and handkerchief doll kits

Picture postcards of historic images

Union Pacific Sesquicentennial light pole banners  
from the 2012 celebration

Out of print books on local history

Open Wed-Fri 1-5pm or by appointment, 515-232-2148

## Is it time to renew your membership?

Renewals are due on the one-year anniversary of last year's payment. Check this newsletter's label for information about your membership. Memberships fund the day-to-day operations of the Society, allowing us to continue to be a valued community resource. We thank you!

|                                |             |                   |                |
|--------------------------------|-------------|-------------------|----------------|
| <b>Introductory - 1st year</b> | <b>\$10</b> | <b>Sustaining</b> | <b>\$100</b>   |
| <b>Individual</b>              | <b>\$25</b> | <b>Partner</b>    | <b>\$250</b>   |
| <b>Family</b>                  | <b>\$40</b> | <b>Benefactor</b> | <b>\$500</b>   |
| <b>Friend</b>                  | <b>\$50</b> | <b>Patron</b>     | <b>\$1,000</b> |

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

**Ames Historical Society, PO Box 821, Ames, IA 50010**

## Consider This Type of Donation

Several donors have contributed objects specifically earmarked for re-sale through the online auction, ebay. Proceeds from these sales support collections care and other projects. A new volunteer, recent retiree, Hank Zaletel, is placing these items on ebay and has already been successful in selling a number of them.

Additional items offered for sale are those that were donated with "no strings attached" that were not appropriate for our collection.



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